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other forms in *-eir*. The disappearance of the *s* in the prefix of the verb may be due to a formation with Latin *de* instead of *dis*, or to the fall of *s* before the consonant, where it may have been silent even when written. In any case this question is not germane to the main point under discussion. It should be stated that the significance of this form was first pointed out by my former teacher, Professor E. S. Sheldon.

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### ON COLERIDGE'S *Ancient Mariner*

It seems now to be generally accepted that *The Ancient Mariner* is a sort of allegory, picturing human life as a Pilgrim's Progress upon the sea. The poem contains not only a mysterious or supernatural element, which none can fail to see, but also carries a deep mystical and symbolic meaning which requires careful interpretation. The larger part of the poem lends itself readily to such an interpretation, and its meaning has become tolerably clear. The mariner starts out on the voyage of life, only to find himself at once getting into all sorts of trouble. This seems symbolic of the sins that overtake men in life. After penance he starts on his return home, rounding out his voyage at the port from which he embarked. There are, however, certain difficult points in the interpretation. On his return voyage the Mariner is aided by the Pilot, the Pilot's boy, and the Hermit. These come out in the Pilot's boat to welcome him as he draws near, and finally rescue him from the sea as his ship goes down. Little is given in the poem to indicate the meaning of these, but of the Hermit the Mariner says:

It is the Hermit good!  
He singeth loud his godly hymns  
That he makes in the wood.  
He'll shrive my soul, he'll wash away  
The Albatross's blood.

He further speaks of him as living in the wood, where "He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve—," praying beside the trees in the forest. In the margin Coleridge calls him "The Hermit of the Wood," and evidently intends to portray in him Nature's High Priest, who shrives the Mariner from his sins against Nature. The Mariner has sinned primarily against God's creatures, or Nature, as symbolized by the Albatross, and only the Hermit, as Priest of Nature, can shrive him from this sin.

The Pilot and the Pilot's boy, however, are not so easily interpreted. They perform no such function in the poem as the Hermit.

The boat they come in, which rescues the Mariner, is called "the Pilot's boat," though neither the Pilot nor the Pilot's boy seems to give any real assistance to the Mariner. On the contrary, they seem only to add to the confusion, for when the crisis came the Pilot said, "I am a-feard," and after the ship went down and they had picked up the Mariner's body,

the Pilot shrieked  
And fell down in a fit.

And to make matters worse, when the Mariner himself took the oars, as the Hermit prayed,

the Pilot's boy,  
Who now doth crazy go,  
Laughed loud and long, and all the while  
His eyes went to and fro.

Then he added further embarrassment and revealed his utter inability to appreciate anything of the real situation by suggesting that the Mariner is no other than the Devil himself.

Few writers have made any attempt to explain the allegory at these points, and none so far as I know has offered a satisfactory explanation. One editor, however, suggests that the Pilot represents "in some sense practical wisdom," and that the Hermit acts "as the bearer of the truths of Christianity." But these suggestions do not seem to meet the difficulty, and are in fact too indefinite to be of value.

As an attempt at explanation, one of my students<sup>1</sup> some time ago ventured the suggestion that perhaps the Pilot may represent the Church and the Pilot's boy the clergy. And a careful consideration of both the poem and the mind of the poet at this period of his work leads me to believe that this is the real solution of the difficulty and the true explanation of the persons. As all students of Coleridge know, he was not well satisfied with the condition of the Church of his day, and not averse to passing criticism on both the Church and the clergy.

Coleridge was brought up in the established church, as the son of a clergyman, but for a period covering the time of the writing of *The Ancient Mariner*, and several succeeding years, he separated himself from that church and identified himself with the Unitarians. Only the annuity from the Wedgwoods in 1798 prevented him accepting a call to become minister of the Unitarian Church at Shrewsbury. At a later date, however, he repudiated the doctrines of Unitarianism, and became more sympathetic toward the orthodox churches. When writing his poem he believed that

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Vernon B. Rhodenizer, now Professor of English in Acadia College, Wolfville, Nova Scotia.

the Church was devoid of spiritual power or religious leadership, and was unable to render any assistance in the spiritual crises of men's lives; he deplored the Church's lack of religion, and the spiritual barrenness of the eighteenth century. Romanticism, indeed, put new emphasis upon the spiritual life. But the Pilot in the poem could provide only the boat, or the empty form and institution of the Church, while the Hermit alone could render any real spiritual assistance. At the very climax of the crisis the Pilot himself was utterly confused and "fell down in a fit." Then, when the Mariner took up the oars, the Pilot's boy went "crazy," and with an idiotic laugh called the Mariner a "devil." This seems to imply that to the clergy of the day spiritual phenomena looked like forms of lunacy, or the work of evil spirits, so unfamiliar were they with anything of the sort. The great religious revival of the century had not yet accomplished its work. With no aid from the church, then, the Mariner passed through the greatest spiritual crisis of his life. And after completing his voyage back to his home harbor, he felt constrained to travel from land to land telling the "ghastly tale" of his new and wonderful experience.

*The Ancient Mariner*, then, is not only Coleridge's interpretation of man's deepest spiritual experiences, but also his criticism of the spiritual feebleness of the Church of his day. The poet, fortunately, lived to see a day when he could think better of the Church.

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#### SHAKSPEARE AND *The Passionate Pilgrim*

The extent to which the short pieces of verse known as *The Passionate Pilgrim* represent the work of Shakspeare has been of scarcely less interest to students of the dramatist than his share in certain plays. But five in this collection (Nos. I, II, III, V, XVI) are indisputably Shakspeare's. Certain others are assigned to him with confidence by some, and rejected with equal confidence by others<sup>1</sup>; whereas other pieces are, as is known, not from the hand of Shakspeare. One on which the critics differ is No. IV. Professor Dowden<sup>2</sup> many years ago pointed out the resemblance between the incident of Cytherea, Adonis, and the brook in this piece (including No. VI) and a passage in *The Taming of the Shrew*.<sup>3</sup> To Dowden

<sup>1</sup> For discussion see C. K. Pooler, *Venus and Adonis*, etc., Arden (also known as the Dowden) edition, lxxi ff.

<sup>2</sup> In his Introduction to *The Passionate Pilgrim* (Griggs' Facsimile).

<sup>3</sup> Induction, scene II, 51 ff.